Regional Planning

The Purpose and How It Works

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I Regional Planning: The Purpose and How It Works

Planning involves consideration of people, the economy, and the environment. Together, they influence and shape the type of Regional Community in which we live and work. The purpose of planning is to co-ordinate the interaction among people, the economy, and the environment in order to achieve the best possible physical and social setting for community living. This is a complex task. Increasingly, there is competition among people for the use of land for their varying activities. The illustrations in Figure 1 show some of these activities.

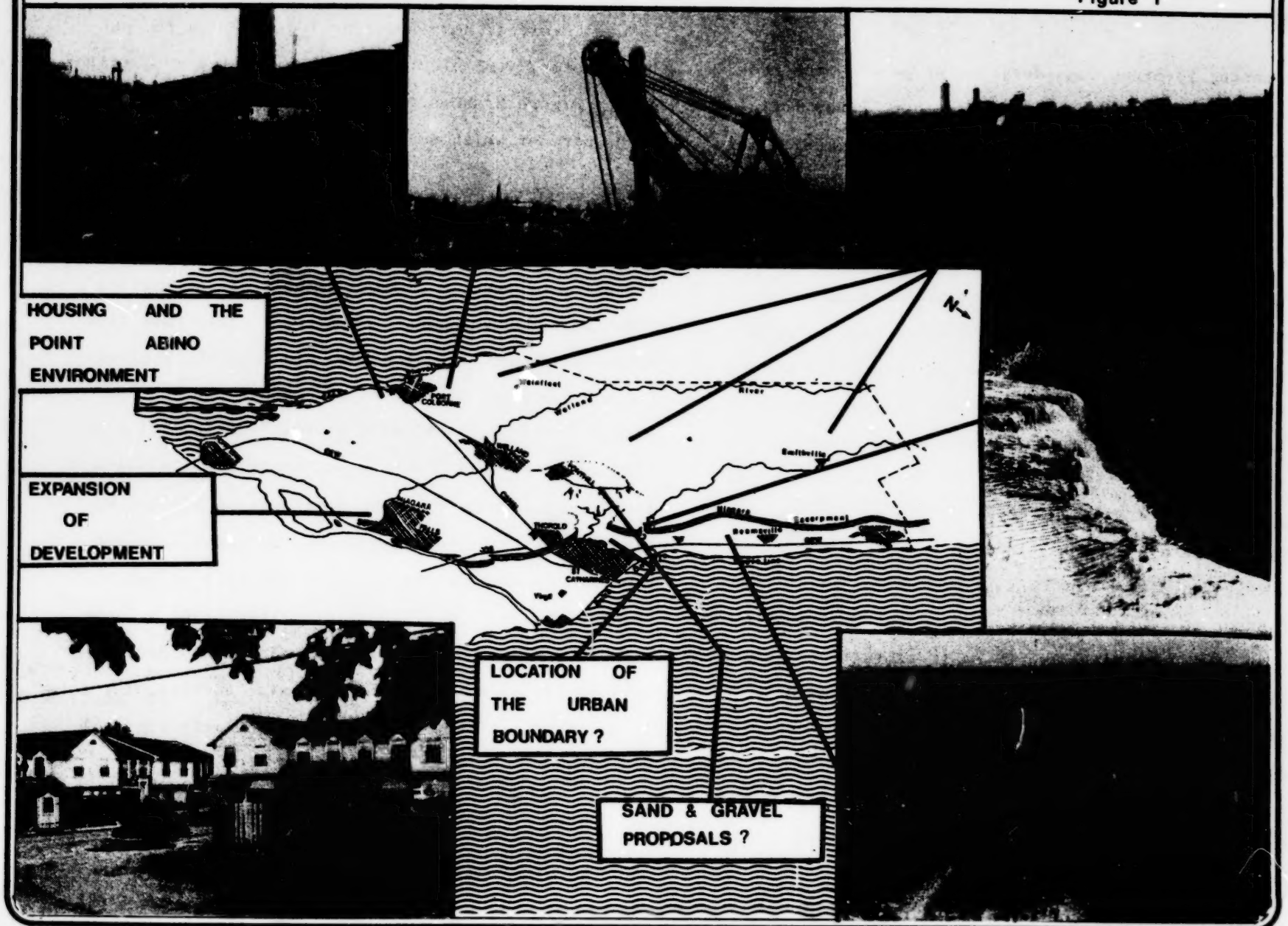
The Niagara Region is located in the most intensively used area of Canada. A narrow band from Windsor to Quebec contains 55% of Canada's population but occupies only 2% of the total land area. Niagara's 367,665 residents are distributed over its 460,000 acres (186,160 hectares) in a variety of urban, rural, and agricultural areas.

Given the purpose of planning and the range of issues involved, how is it carried out? In the public sector, the elected officials play a central role. Figure 2 shows the Regional Government structure, part of which deals with planning.

The purpose of this booklet is to help explain how planning is undertaken in Regional Niagara under the direction of the 12 elected members of the Regional Planning and Development Committee. This Committee makes recommendations for decisions by the Regional Council composed of 29 elected members plus the Regional Chairman. In looking at the "workings" of planning, reference will be made to the responsibilities of the Planning Committee, the organization and activities of the Planning Department, delegation of Provincial responsibilities to the Region, relationships with the local municipalities, and some examples of how policies are developed and development applications reviewed. First, however, let's look briefly at "why" we plan, particularly regional planning.

REGIONAL PLANNING ISSUES

Figure 1


HOUSING AND THE POINT ABINO ENVIRONMENT
EXPANSION OF DEVELOPMENT
LOCATION OF THE URBAN BOUNDARY ?
SAND & GRAVEL PROPOSALS ?

II The Purpose of Planning

Individual communities are linked to other communities by the economic and social activities of their people. In Niagara, over 25,000 people live in one municipality and work in another. Larger shopping centres attract people from surrounding communities. Similarly, educational, cultural, and recreational activities are shared by the people of Niagara. Brock University, Niagara College, Shaw Festival, and the amenities of the Niagara Parkway, the Lake Erie shoreline and the Welland Canal are all examples of shared experiences. In addition, with regard to engineering services, large water treatment or sewage treatment plants frequently serve more than one municipality.

Regional Planning represents a recognition of the above interrelationships. It has developed for two related reasons:

1. people's activities have spread from the local neighbourhood into the surrounding communities and countryside.
2. more people, traffic, quarries, hydro lines and other activities are making more, and often competing, claims for the use of land.

In the 1960's, a municipally initiated study of Niagara's local governments observed that people's activities had extended beyond the individual municipal government structure of the day. There were competing and often conflicting uses of land through which economic and environment opportunities were being reduced and costly solutions would be required to deal with pollution problems, water supply, and traffic movements.

In 1970, the opportunity for regional planning appeared in Niagara with the assignment of this responsibility to the new Regional Municipality. The creation of Regional Niagara has enabled the development of a regional planning process through which decisions with respect to public and private development, and the formulation of public service programs take place in the context of interrelated policies for urban areas, economic development, agricultural activities, environmental areas, piped services, and transportation.

Planning involves the development of a plan or a framework to guide decisions. Equally important is the realization that planning is an ongoing process designed to provide decision-makers with the infor-

*(1) Chairman John Campbell is an officio member of all committees.
(2) Committee Chairman
(3) Committee Vice-Chairman

REGIONAL COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN *(1)
29 COUNCILLORS (12 MAYORS, 17 REGIONAL COUNCILLORS)

Figure 2

FINANCE COMMITTEE

T. Morgan (2)
W. Dick (3)
M. Dietsch
R. Hall
G. Huffman
E. Lancaster
D. Mann
S. Pettit
A. Pietz
R. Saracino
J. Teal
W. Thompson

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

W. Smeaton (2)
E. Bergenstein (3)
W. Augustine
R. Bell
B. Dickson
F. Dickson
R. Hall
C. Hodgkins
G. Huffman
W. Longo
A. Pietz
P. Sobol

PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES COMMITTEE

S. Pettit (2)
R. Adams (3)
W. Augustine
E. Bergenstein
M. Dietsch
C. Hodgkins
H. Hummel
R. Konkle
L. Lemelin
W. Marshall
D. McMillan
P. Sobol

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

R. Book (2)
J. Teal (3)
W. Augustine
W. Dick
E. Lancaster
D. Mann
P. Sobol
E. Stranges

REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

- FINANCE DEPARTMENT
- CLERKS DEPARTMENT
- SOLICITOR'S OFFICE
- PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT
- PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
- PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
- SENIOR CITIZENS DEPARTMENT
- SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

- FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES
- NIAGARA REG BOARD OF HEALTH
- NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
- BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF POLICE
- LAND DIVISION COMMITTEE
- NIAGARA CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
- NIAGARA REG TOURIST COUNCIL
- NIAGARA REG. DEVELOPMENT CORP.

mation on which to effectively manage the economic and environmental well-being of Niagara. Planning is concerned with day to day decisions and changing circumstances; but, through the planning process, there is greater prospect that these often pragmatic and individual decisions will ultimately add up to a more desirable Regional Community.

III The Operation of Planning in Niagara

The Regional Planning and Development Committee

The Planning and Development Committee has 12 members plus the Regional Chairman. It is one of the four standing committees of Regional Council (Figure 2). As such, the Planning Committee is charged with the responsibility to make recommendations to the Regional Council on a wide range of land use, environmental and economic uses affecting the Niagara Region.

The 12 members of the Planning Committee are selected by the Regional Council from among its 29 Regional Councillors. These Councillors are elected from the 12 local municipalities in Niagara.

Major Responsibilities

The Planning and Development Committee is responsible for making recommendations on a large number of development activities which determine Niagara's future. Some of these activities are initiated by the Region itself and some by other governments but most are initiated privately. To guide this work a Regional Policy Plan has been adopted containing policies on such topics as the nature and location of development, agriculture, environmental areas, transportation and piped services. In addition, the Committee maintains, with the assistance of the Regional Planning Department, an ongoing planning process which consists of such activities as holding public meetings; reviewing and changing if necessary, existing policies; studies on economic conditions; determining future requirements for housing and for sand and gravel; and providing public information.

The Planning Committee works with the other three standing Committees: Finance, Public Works and Social Services in areas of common interest.

Delegation

One reason for the formation of Regional Government was to enable the Provincial Government to delegate some of their responsibilities to municipal government. This has been occurring in planning. Decisions previously made in Toronto are being made by the Regional Council. The following diagram illustrates responsibilities delegated to the Region.

Delegation of Planning Responsibilities

Planning Responsibilities	Remaining with the Ontario Ministry of Housing	Possible Future Delegation to Regional Niagara	Delegated to Niagara Region
Approval of Regional Policy Plan	———		
Approval of Local Official Plans	———	—— ——	
Approval of Subdivisions			Sept. 1977
Approval of Codominium Plans of Subdivision	———	—— ——	
Approval of Part-Lot Control By-laws			Sept. 1977
Comments on Zoning By-laws to the Ontario Municipal Board			Sept. 1974
Monitoring Decisions of the Regional Land Division Committee			Sept. 1974
Monitoring Decisions of the Local Committees of Adjustment			Sept. 1974

A major responsibility delegated to Regional Niagara is the approval of subdivisions. The Planning Committee reviews Regional policies and comments from the local municipality as well as those from a number of agencies before recommending approval or not of a residential or industrial subdivision. The final decision is made by Regional Council.

This delegation has allowed subdivision proposals to be considered in a public forum (Regional Council) within the Niagara Region rather than in Toronto and has resulted in a considerable speed-up and better understanding of the approval process.

The Region is likely to receive the responsibility for approving amendments to local official plans after the Policy Plan is fully approved.

Committee Meetings

The Planning and Development Committee meets every two weeks (or more often if required) on Wednesday afternoons in the Regional Council Chambers at 150 Berryman Avenue in St. Catharines. The agenda for each meeting normally includes staff reports with recommendations concerning either development applications or policy planning issues plus administra-

tive matters, staff memoranda, and correspondence.

Planning Committee meetings are open to the public and are covered by the Press. Material on the agenda is available to the public at the start of the meeting and is free of charge. Individuals or organizations, having made a prior appointment by contacting the Planning Department, may address the Committee on relevant topics.

Subcommittees

The Planning and Development Committee sponsors a number of subcommittees (or advisory committees) corresponding to the major activities and interests in the Region.

- Agricultural Subcommittee
- Region Niagara Tourist Council
- Business and Industrial Development Subcommittee
- Advisory Housing Committee

Members from the Planning and Development Committee also serve on a variety of liaison and advisory committees such as:

- the Welland Canal Lands Review Committee
- Water and Sewer Services Subcommittee
- Subcommittee on Waste Management Study
- Niagara Region Highway Co-ordinating Committee

Land Division Committee

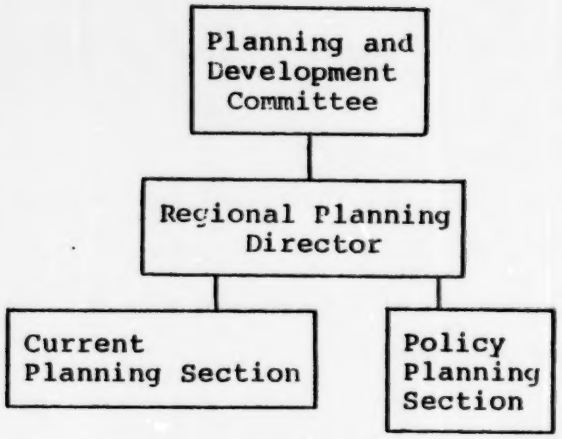
The Regional Land Division Committee is responsible for granting consents for "severances". Thus, an individual parcel of land may be divided in two for sale and/or development.

The Regional Council, through the Planning and Development Committee is responsible for appointing members to the Land Division Committee, one member from each of the 12 local municipalities. The Region also provides a budget for the Committee. In all other respects, the Land Division Committee is an independent body but its decisions may be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board, a provincially appointed body.

The Planning and Development Department

Department

The Planning and Development Department reports to the Planning and Development Committee. The Department is organized into two sections operating under the Regional Planning Director.

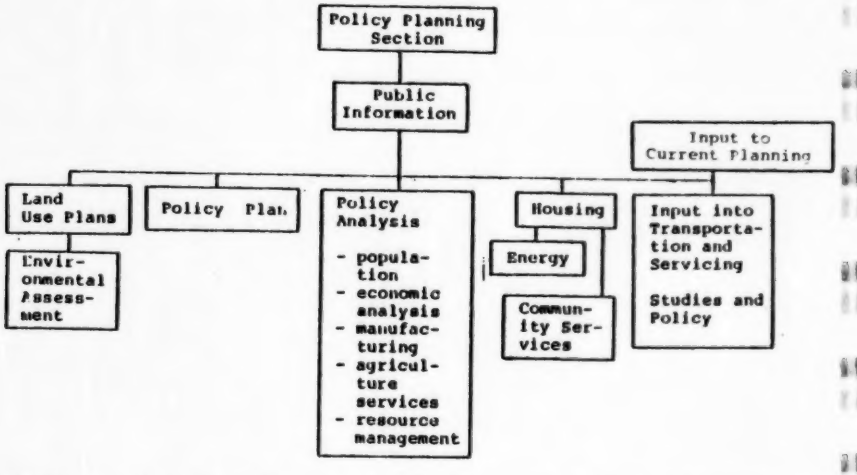


The functions of the Planning Department stem from the responsibilities of the Committee. Essentially there are five major functions as illustrated below.

The above five functions are undertaken by the Policy and Current Planning Sections of the Department as described next .

Policy Planning Section

This section undertakes a broad range of activities as generally illustrated by the following diagram.



Because of the nature of planning (Section II), the above activities are very much interrelated and contribute to the five main functions of the Department.

1. Land Use Plans

A number of government bodies prepare plans which affect the use of land. These plans may relate to specific aspects like transportation and hydro facilities or more general plans for a community. An example is an official plan for a local municipality. The Region contributes to the development of these plans and reviews them for conformity with its own policies.

For some projects, the preparation of an environment assessment report is required. In 1980, the Ministry of Environment enacted regulations to require environmental assessments for certain types of municipal projects.

2. Policy Plan

Regional Council has adopted a Policy Plan to guide decisions on the economic, social and environmental development of Niagara. Since the adoption of the Plan in 1973, some revisions and additions have been made as part of the ongoing planning process which recognizes changing conditions and new information.

The style of the Policy Plan is towards a process for decision-making rather than establishing a detailed blueprint. This style is more responsive to changes. However, it also requires good information to make the process work for informed decision-making. An example is the study of the supply and demand for sand and gravel. Information from this study will be used to make decisions on applications for pits.

New or revised policies are considered from time to time. For instance, the existing policy on water-line extensions beyond urban areas boundaries is under review. How this review is carried out is shown in Section IV. Individuals and municipalities can request amendments to the Policy Plan.

3. Policy Analysis

To plan requires knowledge of population and economic characteristics. To this end, some work in this area includes:

- reviewing and projecting population changes,
- identifying changes in the Regional economy,
- supporting the tourist and agricultural industries
- determining land available for industrial development

4. Housing

Regional housing policies have been developed related to the three policy areas of affordability, conservation, and rehabilitation. Local housing policies and development proposals are reviewed in relation to these policy areas.

Other activities involving housing include:

- a semi-annual inventory of sites available

for housing

- development of policies for energy conservation
- reviewing special housing requirements such as group homes

5. Input to Transportation and Servicing Studies and Policies

Public investment in roads, and water and sewage facilities is an important determinant for the location and timing of development. Detailed population, land use and employment estimates are provided for use in studies of these facilities.

Reviews are carried out on the land use effects of proposed road extensions, railway relocations, and servicing extensions.

6. Input to Current Planning Section

Assistance is provided to the staff of the Current Planning Section in the review of certain development applications. These applications may involve housing near an environmental area or changes to local planning policies.

7. Public Information

Many inquiries are received from the public on such diverse topics as Regional policies, population, historical information, industrial areas, and land use. Also, information is provided and liaison maintained with the 12 local municipalities to assist their activities.

Information available includes:

- population for small areas
- a booklet of demographic and economic data
- housing site inventories
- energy reports
- environmental information

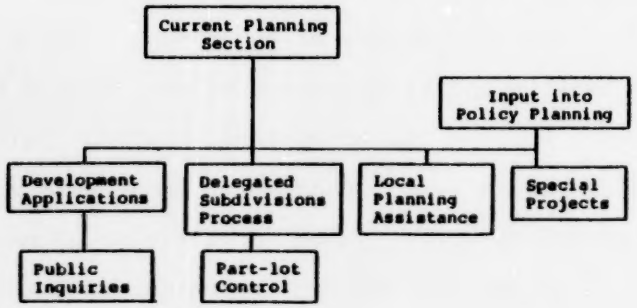
Through an interdepartmental committee, the Public Information Co-ordinating Committee, information is prepared and distributed on the Regional Government and its activities. Work for this Committee includes:

- booklet entitled "Information Available from Regional Niagara"
- a newspaper supplement (tabloid) on the Region's functions and activities
- a Regional Newsletter for all Regional staff

Public presentations also are made at local educational institutions and for other organizations.

Current Planning Section

The major role of this Section is the implementation of planning policies through the review and preparation of recommendations on the many development applications received by the Region. The following diagram illustrates this section's activities.

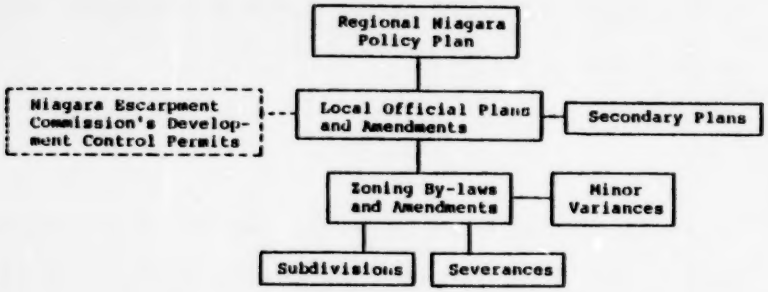


Implementation of Policies

Most of the development proposals are initiated by private individuals or companies. These proposals can involve the division of land, the construction of new buildings, or a change in the use of land. Most development applications are submitted to a municipality or agency that has the responsibility to approve the requested change. Regional Niagara, having broad planning responsibilities, either receives or is circulated development applications for comment. In 1980, over 1,000 development applications were reviewed.

Regional Council has adopted the Regional Niagara Policy Plan to guide development in order to fulfill certain goals and objectives. Although individual development applications may be small in nature, the cumulative effect of many applications can have an important impact on the overall development pattern in the Region. Therefore, each development application is reviewed to ensure that the proposal agrees with the adopted policies and will assist in providing the desired pattern of land use in the Region.

Most applications have an impact on the objectives and policies of local municipalities as well. Thus, when reviewing applications, Regional staff discuss them with local municipalities before completing the Regional review. These discussions enable the exchange of information and a better understanding of local concerns. The accompanying diagram shows the relationship among several types of applications which are described below.



1. Official Plan

An official plan is the basic planning document adopted by the Council to provide a statement of the goals of the community and thus serves as a guide for future development in the municipality.

The official plan may be amended to reflect the changing expectations or needs of the people within a municipality. The Region comments and makes recommendations on local official plan amendments to the Minister of Housing which has the authority to approve the amendment. If there is an objection to an official plan amendment, the Minister may refer the amendment to the Ontario Municipal Board for a decision.

2. Secondary Plans

Secondary plans are prepared by the local municipality to supplement the general policies of an official plan and to provide more detailed guidelines for the development and redevelopment of a specific area. Although secondary plans usually do not require the approval of the Region and the Ministry of Housing, the Region does request the opportunity to review and comment on such plans.

3. Zoning By-law

Zoning By-laws regulate the use of land, and the size, location and use of buildings. Zoning By-laws are adopted and administered by the local municipalities. Because zoning by-laws contain fairly detailed regulations, changes or amendments are often necessary to permit some desirable development proposals which were not anticipated when the by-law was originally approved. Small changes, called a minor variance, may be made by the local Committee of Adjustment.

4. Division of Land (Severances and Subdivisions)

Existing parcels of land can be divided into smaller lots by two different procedures: consent (severance) and plan of subdivision.

(a) Consents (Severances)

The division of land by severance usually involves the creation of one or two new lots (see Sec-

tion IV.4). Because a smaller number of lots are created as compared to a plan of subdivision, the severance process is usually a simpler process with fewer conditions of approval and fewer agencies involved in the approval process.

(b) Plan of Subdivision

Division of land by plan of subdivision occurs when a large number of lots are to be created and/or when there are some difficult problems that should be resolved before development can proceed. The subdivision process is more complex than the severance process (see Section IV.3).

Since September 1, 1977, the Region has been delegated the authority to approve plans of subdivision under The Planning Act, as well as the approval of part-lot control by-laws.

5. Niagara Escarpment Commission's Development Control Permits

Within the "Development Control Area", which straddles the Niagara Escarpment, all previous zoning by-laws ceased to have any legal status. Any significant development or change to the landscape requires a permit approved by the Niagara Escarpment Commission. The Region comments on the majority of these applications to the Commission.

6. Other Applications

The Current Planning Section also reviews Road Closing By-laws, and applications for waterline and sewer extensions outside the Urban Areas Boundaries. In addition, studies are undertaken based on problems associated with some of the applications reviewed by this Section.

IV How Planning Works

How does planning really work? Earlier sections have provided information on the purpose of planning and the Regional Planning and Development Committee and Department. This section examines four examples of the workings of planning. Two examples relate to the review of policies and two to development applications.

1. Reviewing Existing Policies

Changing conditions or new information may indicate the desirability of reviewing existing policies. Such is the case with the policy for waterline extensions beyond the Urban Areas Boundaries. The policy currently in the Regional Policy Plan states that waterline extensions are permitted beyond urban areas only to solve existing health problems. The reasons for this policy include limiting costly servicing extensions and not encouraging linear residential development into agricultural areas.

In applying the policy, a number of questions began to appear:

- What are the effects of a short waterline extension to a suitable development site? Such an extension would not conform to existing policies because it is outside of the urban boundaries.
- Are land use policies sufficient to prevent undesirable development if a waterline is built?
- Should waterlines be provided for agricultural activities like greenhouses?

With these and other questions being asked, the Regional Planning and Development Committee authorized planning staff to assess the benefits and costs of changing the present policy on waterline extensions.

The assessment of the policy involved a five part program:

a) a review of the rationale for the present policy;

b) an investigation of the amount of new development along recent waterline extensions in agricultural areas;

c) a series of meetings with other Regional departments (e.g. Public Works and Finance); other affected agencies (e.g. Niagara Regional Health Unit, Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food);

and local municipalities;

d) site inspections and interviews with greenhouse operators located along recent waterline extensions; and

e) search for other experiences and reports on the issue.

The result was a report to the Planning Committee discussing the benefits and costs. Three options were set out:

- no change in the existing policy,
- extensions only for agricultural purposes, and
- a new policy setting out an evaluation process for applications for waterline extensions

The next stage in the policy review is the circulation of the report to the local municipalities and government agencies for comment. This has been authorized by the Planning Committee. The resulting comments together with any staff proposals for changes to the existing policy will be presented to the Planning Committee. If the Committee decides to give further considerations to possible changes to the present policy, public input will be sought before preparation of an amendment to the Regional Policy Plan.

2. Amending the Regional Policy Plan

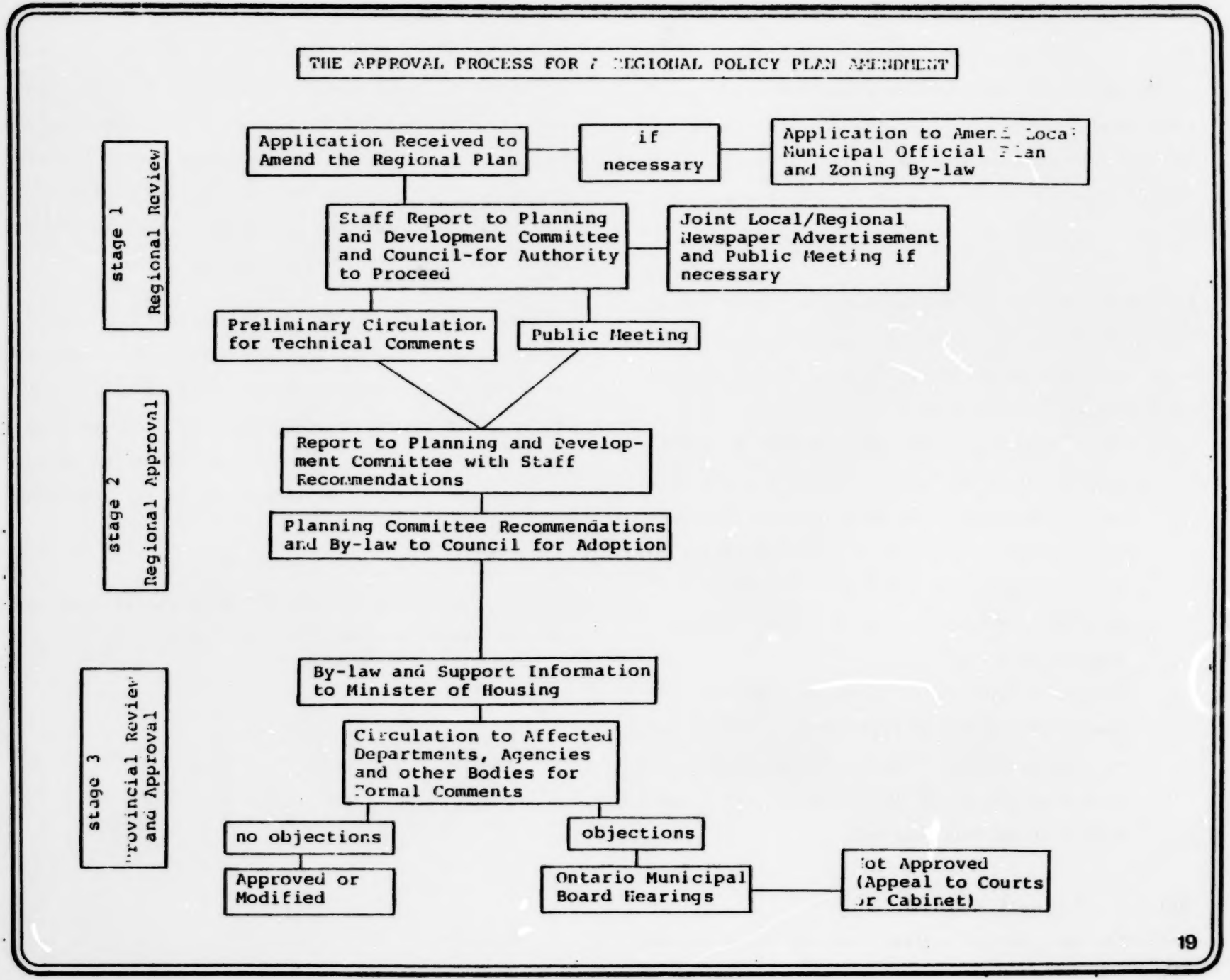
The Minister of Housing is responsible for approving the Regional Policy Plan and amendments to it. Objections to the Policy Plan or amendments are referred by the Minister to the provincially appointed Ontario Municipal Board for a hearing and decision which can be appealed to the Ontario Cabinet.

Preparing amendments to the Policy Plan is the Region's responsibility. Working through The Planning Act of Ontario, the Region follows the following three stages in considering amendments to the Policy Plan. These stages are illustrated in the accompanying chart.

Stage 1: Regional Review

Applications from individuals and local municipalities, are made in writing and include:

- the nature and purpose of the amendment desired,
- justification of the need for the amendment, and
- supporting background information


THE APPROVAL PROCESS FOR A REGIONAL POLICY PLAN AMENDMENT
stage 1
Regional Review
Application Received to Amend the Regional Plan
if necessary
Application to Amend Local Municipal Official Plan and Zoning By-law
Staff Report to Planning and Development Committee and Council-for Authority to Proceed
Joint Local/Regional Newspaper Advertisement and Public Meeting if necessary
Preliminary Circulation for Technical Comments
Public Meeting
stage 2
Regional Approval
Report to Planning and Development Committee with Staff Recommendations
Planning Committee Recommendations and By-law to Council for Adoption
By-law and Support Information to Minister of Housing
stage 3
Provincial Review and Approval
Circulation to Affected Departments, Agencies and other Bodies for Formal Comments
no objections
objections
Approved or Modified
Ontario Municipal Board Hearings
Not Approved (Appeal to Courts or Cabinet)

Often an amendment to the Policy Plan also requires an amendment to the local municipal official plan. Consequently, for greater efficiency, the Region has been encouraging joint newspaper advertisements and joint public meetings with the local municipalities.

Following receipt of an application, staff report to the Planning Committee to request authorization to proceed with both the preliminary technical circulation and the public meeting:

- the preliminary technical circulation is for comments from the affected local municipality, the Regional Public Works Department and agencies having an interest in the application such as the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority or the Ministry of Transportation and Communications,
- the public meeting is to obtain comments and concerns from the general public. The meeting is advertised and a factual information report from staff is available to assist individual review of the application.

Stage 2: Regional Approval

Following the public meeting and receipt of technical comments, a staff report is prepared for consideration by the Planning Committee. If the amendment is recommended for approval, an implementing by-law together with a report from the Planning Committee come before Regional Council for a decision. If adopted, the amendment is sent to the Ministry of Housing for review and approval.

Stage 3: Provincial Review and Approval

The Minister of Housing circulates all amendments to a number of agencies before making a decision. If the Minister receives objections from these agencies or the public, he normally refers the amendment to the Ontario Municipal Board for a hearing and decision.

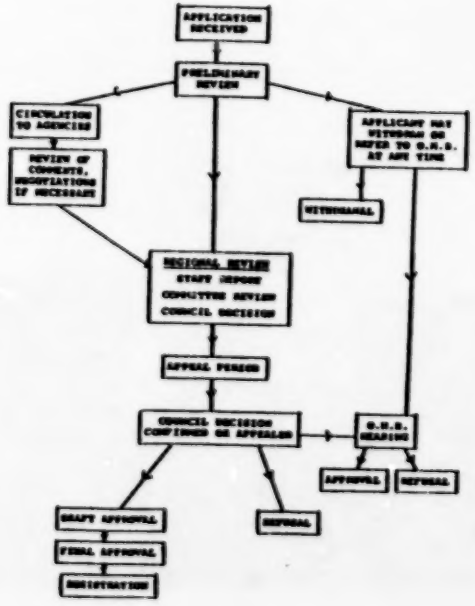
In the case of no objection the Minister approves the amendment and notifies the Region.

3. Processing a Subdivision

To provide an orderly pattern of urban development, provincial and local governments control the subdivision and sale of land. The two-fold purpose of such power is to not only ensure properly serviced and adequate building sites but also to prevent an undue increase in the tax burden on the municipal ratepayers.

The "subdivision" process simply means the division of a parcel of property into several smaller parcels, each of which can then be sold. The approval process for subdivisions establishes the conditions under which land may be divided for sale to separate owners and establishes the future street and lot pattern for the community. Also, the process can obtain necessary facilities for the community, such as paved streets, water and sewer services and public facilities such as parks. The subdivision process is also important since the conversion of land to approved, serviced lots for various types of housing constitutes the principal means whereby housing becomes available to meet the needs of the community.

The authority for subdivision approval has been administered by the Province; however, recently this responsibility has been delegated to some regional governments and restructured counties. As of September 1, 1977, Regional Niagara was delegated the authority to approve subdivisions. The subdivision process is outlined briefly in the accompanying chart and described below.



(i) submission of the application by the prospective subdivider, after he has undertaken research and designed the plan.

(ii) circulation to various public and private agencies that may have an interest in the development. Circulation only occurs after a complete application has been received, a "Public Notice" sign has been erected on the site and the local municipality is informed. In some cases of direct conflict with an official plan or lack of services, staff recommend refusal to the Planning Committee without circulation.

The Planning Committee provides sixty days within which the agencies are encouraged to comment. Extensions of time may be granted for valid reasons although prompt replies are desired to expedite the approval process.

(iii) preparation of a staff report after all comments have been received. The report is sent for review to all members of the Planning and Development Committee and the local municipality involved at least one week prior to its consideration by the Committee.

(iv) Planning Committee's review and recommendation on the staff report forwarded to Regional Council.

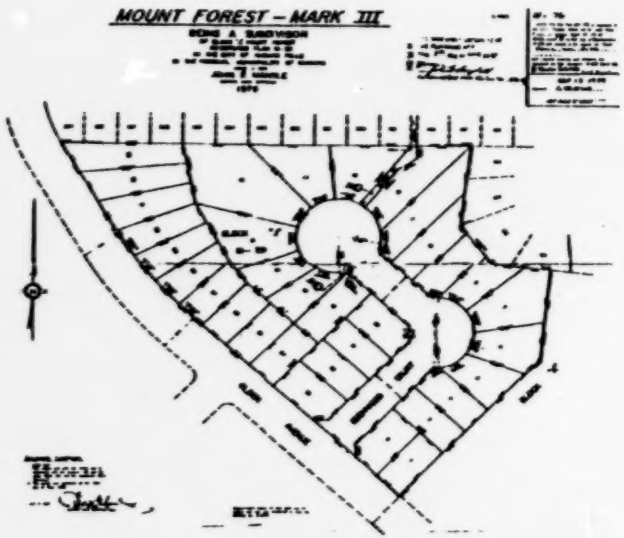
(v) Council's consideration of the application and the Committee's recommendation. Notice of Council's decision is forwarded by the Clerk to all interested parties and the 21 day appeal period provided for under The Planning Act begins.

(vi) If no appeals are received, the Regional Chairman endorses the plan and it is "draft approved". If the decision was to refuse the plan, the file would be closed. Draft approval is the major step in the process since it is a commitment to permit the registration and development of the plan once all conditions of approval have been satisfactorily resolved. The developer, under the provi-

sions of The Planning Act, must resolve all of the conditions of approval within three years of the date of draft approval.

If there is an appeal, the Region refers the subdivision to the Ontario Municipal Board for a hearing and decision.

(vii) after the Region has been notified by those agencies who have requested conditions that the conditions have been met, the plan is given "final approval". The Plan may then be registered and lots sold.



4. Severing a Lot

The purpose of the severance procedure is to allow the creation of a small number of lots, usually less than three, by a simple method. Plans of subdivision which involve many lots are more complex and require more review.

The approval of applications to divide land through the severance procedure lies with the Regional Niagara Land Division Committee which was formed in February, 1974. Previously, local Committees of Adjustment had the authority to grant consents.

The Land Division Committee is composed of twelve members, with one member on the Committee from each area municipality.

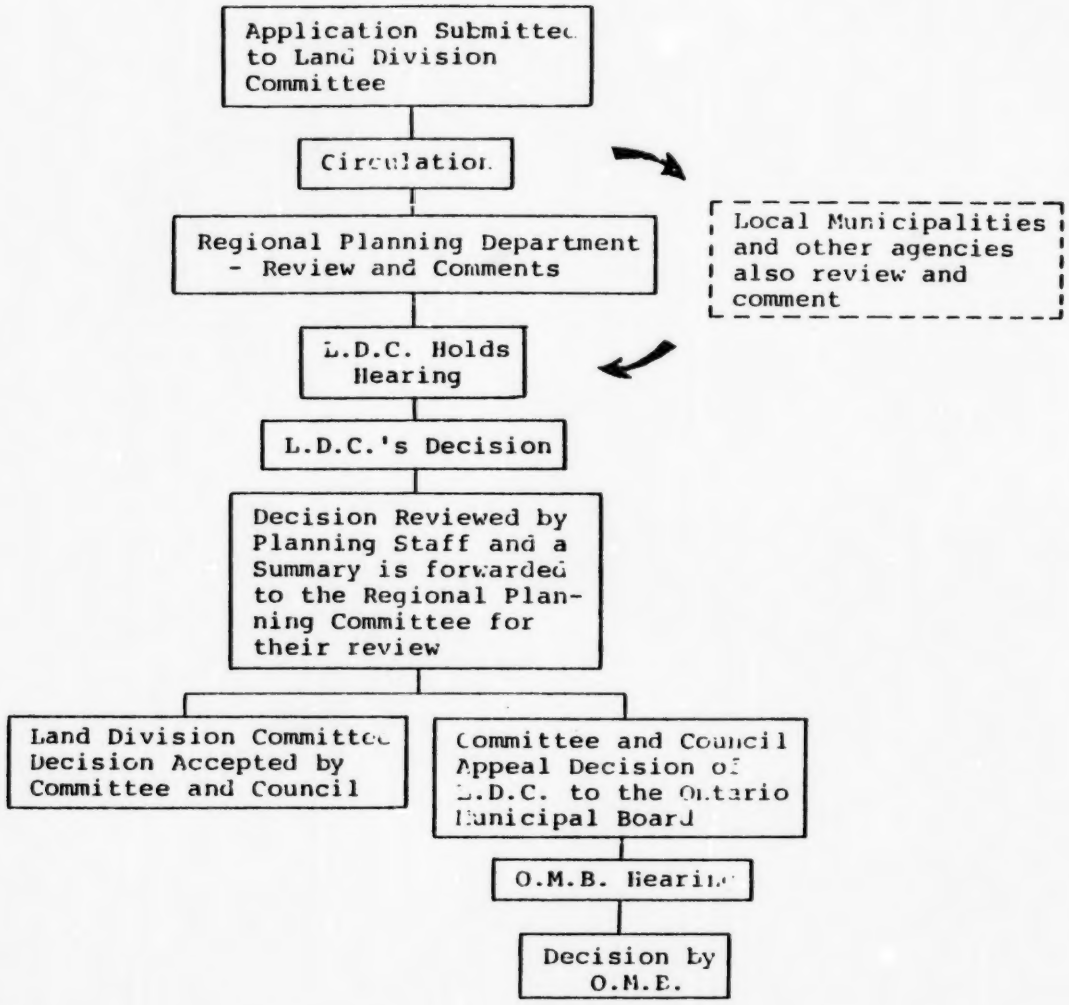
A severance application submitted on a standard form is processed by the Land Division Committee at a fee of $50.00 as prescribed under The Planning Act. Once a completed application has been filed, it must be heard or reviewed within 30 days of receipt. Before the hearing, the application is circulated to a number of agencies including the municipality in which the proposed severance is located

as well as the Regional Planning Department for comment.

In many cases the applicant will make preliminary inquiries concerning his severance before making a formal application to the Land Division Committee. This procedure is encouraged by the Regional Planning Department as it allows Planning staff to assist the applicant in relation to Regional policies, other planning documents and refer him to other agencies where further information may be obtained.

The Land Division Committee circulates the completed application to different agencies to obtain information based on the agency's expertise. For example, the Regional Planning Department reviews the application in light of the Regional Policy Plan, a document that provides land use policies at the Regional scale. If the application is complex a site visit is usually made by staff and discussions held with other parties that have an interest in the application. A local municipality, when reviewing an application, provides comments based on its local offical plan and zoning by-law. Other agencies such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Food base their comments on the "Food Land Guidelines". Should the application be in an area of environmental significance, the Ministry of Natural Resources would provide information based on their policies.

The accompanying chart simply illustrates the Regional Planning Department's and Committee's involvement in the Land Division Committee's procedure. It is important to note that the decision of the Land Division Committee whether to approve or to refuse an application, can be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board by anyone within 21 days after the decision by Committee. The appeal must be lodged with the Land Division Committee and must be accompanied by a $75.00 fee. The fee and appeal information is then sent to the Ontario Municipal Board which sets a date to hear the application.


Application Submitted to Land Division Committee
Circulation
Regional Planning Department - Review and Comments
Local Municipalities and other agencies also review and comment
L.D.C. Holds Hearing
L.D.C.'s Decision
Decision Reviewed by Planning Staff and a Summary is forwarded to the Regional Planning Committee for their review
Land Division Committee Decision Accepted by Committee and Council
Committee and Council Appeal Decision of L.D.C. to the Ontario Municipal Board
O.M.B. Hearing
Decision by O.M.B.

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